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# The Path of Dreams



By

GEORGE MARION McCLELLAN

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**By GEORGE MARION McCLELLAN**

**LOUISVILLE, KY.**



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# The Path of Dreams



Sweet-scented winds move inward from the shore,  
Blythe is the air of June with silken gleams,  
My roving fancy treads at will once more,  
The golden path of dreams.

Along the sloping uplands yellow wheat  
Is bending to the honied breath of June,  
While all the lowlands slumber at my feet  
This glorious afternoon.

To balmy gusts from blue-girt breezy hills  
The clover blossoms nod with graceful art,  
And all the mystery of living thrills  
The ever pulsing heart.

A boon to lovers still, the sweet wild rose  
Adds perfume to the languor in the air,  
And whispering Zephyr scatters as she goes  
Sweet atters everywhere.

The wild birds restlessly from tree to tree,  
Flit ceaselessly beneath the sunlit skies,  
And give a sumptuous afternoon to me,  
In song and gladsome cries.

## THE PATH OF DREAMS

---

Blue gauze the empty distances enfold;  
The stream-fed glens lie bare in loveliness,  
And waves of light along the paths of gold  
The glens and hills caress.

In garish light the rustling, shimmering corn,  
The trembling leaves, the passing winds caress,  
And in the heart a subtle throb is born  
Of mighty tenderness.

Vague yearnings, tenderness that prompt to tears  
And fill the heart with mingled pain and bliss,  
Come down to men through many thousand years,  
On afternoons like this.

What is there in the vistas, song, and flower,  
That prompt alike to happiness and tears,  
Unites life's scattered visions in the hour  
Of past and present years?

Is it the throb of life on soft hill slopes,  
A thousand passions burned to fever heat  
Spread out in shimmering glows that run to hopes,  
For some fulfillment sweet?

Some half fulfillment yet of vanished gleams,  
Of vanished promises when love's wild glow  
Made fervid youth a tenement of dreams  
Back in the long ago.

DAYBREAK

Awake! arise! Oh, men of my race,  
I see our morning star,  
And feel the dawn-breeze on my face  
Creep inward, from afar.

I feel the dawn, with soft-like tread,  
Steal through our lingering night,  
Aglow with flame our sky to spread  
In floods of morning light.

Arise! my men, be wide awake  
To hear the bugle call,  
For Negroes everywhere to break  
The bands that bind us all.

Great Lincoln, now with glory graced,  
All God-like with the pen,  
Our chattel fetters broke, and placed  
Us in the ranks of men.

But even he could not awake  
The dead, nor make alive,  
Nor change stern nature's laws which make  
The fittest to survive.

Let every man his soul inure,  
In noblest sacrifice,  
And with a heart of oak endure,  
Ignoble, arrant prejudice.

## THE PATH OF DREAMS

---

Endurance, love, will yet prevail  
Against all laws of hate;  
Such armaments can never fail  
Our race its best estate.

Let none make common cause with sin,  
Be that in honor bound,  
For they who fight with God must win  
On every battle ground.

Though wrongs there are, and wrongs have been,  
And wrongs we still must face,  
We have more friends than foes within  
The Anglo-Saxon race.

In spite of all the babel cries,  
Of those who rage and shout,  
God's silent forces daily rise  
To bring His will about.

Our portion is, and yet will be,  
To drink a bitter cup  
In many things, yet all must see  
The race is moving up.

Oh! men of my race, awake! arise!  
Our morning's in the air,  
There's scarlet all along the skies,  
Our day breaks everywhere.

TO HOLLYHOCKS

Gay hollyhocks with flaming bells  
And waving plumes, as gently swells  
The breeze upon the Summer air;  
You bind me still with magic spells  
When to the wind, in grave farewells,  
You bow in all your graces fair.

You bring me back the childhood view,  
Where arching skies and deepest blue  
Stretch on in endless lengths above;  
To see you so awakes anew  
Long past emotions, from which grew  
My wild and first heart-throbs of love.

There is in all your brilliant dyes,  
Your gorgeousness and azure skies,  
A joy like soothing summer rain;  
Yet in the scene there vaguely lies  
A something half akin to sighs,  
Along the borderland of pain.

SPRING DAWN

There comes to my heart from regions remote  
A wild desire for the hedge and the brush,  
Whenever I hear the first wild note  
Of the meadow lark and the hermit thrush.

The broken and upturned earth to the air,  
By a million thrusting blades of Spring,  
Sends out from the sod and everywhere  
Its pungent aromas over everything.

Then it's Oh, for the hills, the dawn, and the dew,  
The breath of the fields and the silent lake,  
And watching the wings of light burst through  
The scarlet blush of the new daybreak.

It is then, when the earth still nestles in sleep,  
And the robes of light are scarce unfurled,  
You can almost feel, in its mighty sweep,  
The onward rush and roll of the world.



## THE EPHEMERA

Creatures of gauze and velvet wings,  
With life for one brief day,  
Dancing and flitting where the breezes fling  
The sweets of blooming May;  
Skimming the stream where the wild thyme grows,  
You dart with keen delight,  
Only to die when the sweet wild rose  
Gives perfume to the night.

Weary at last, when the day is done,  
Of the breeze and clover's breath,  
Folding your delicate wings with the sun,  
You gently drop to death;  
Glimmering wings and a few short hours  
Were yours in sweet delight,  
Living for a day in the world of flowers,  
And then—everlasting night.

Creatures of gauze and velvet wings,  
With a day of gleams and flowers,  
Who knows—in the light of eternal things—  
Your life is less than ours?  
Weary at last, it is ours, like you,  
When our brief day is done,  
Folding our hands, to say adieu,  
And pass with the setting sun.

THE HILLS OF SEWANEE

Sewanee Hills of dear delight,  
    Prompting my dreams that used to be,  
I know you are waiting me still tonight  
    By the Unika Range of Tennessee.

The blinking stars in endless space,  
    The broad moonlight and silvery gleams,  
Tonight caress your wind-swept face,  
    And fold you in a thousand dreams.

Your far outlines, less seen than felt,  
    Which wind with hill propensities,  
In moonlight dreams I see you melt  
    Away in vague immensities.

And, far away, I still can feel  
    Your mystery that ever speaks  
Of vanished things, as shadows steal  
    Across your breast and rugged peaks.

O, dear blue hills, that lie apart,  
    And wait so patiently down there,  
Your peace takes hold upon my heart  
    And makes its burden less to bear.

HYDROMEL AND RUE

Lord, let me live to serve and make a loan  
Of life and soul in love to my heart's own.  
And what if they should never care or know  
How dark sometimes and weary are the ways,  
How piercing cold and pitiless the snow,  
How desolate and lonely are the days  
Which life for me holds sometimes in reserve?  
And what if those I love esteem above  
Me, others all untried and far less true,  
And lightly barter off my wealth of love  
For careless, strange, and passing comrades new?  
Oh Lord, those, whom I love, I still would serve.

To be permitted, once in this short life,  
To hold a little child close to my heart  
In fatherhood, as mine, is worth all strife  
Which circumstance and time to me impart.  
To know the bliss of chaste and holy love,  
To have one friend to even half divine  
My hungry heart, is heaven from above  
Come to this ever-longing soul of mine.

And so, dear Lord, I thank Thee for the cup  
Of hydromel Thou givest me to sup,  
Though rue and hyssop pass my lips and fill  
My life with earthly sorrow, grief, and pain,  
In faith my soul will rise to thank Thee still  
For garish day, for guerdon and its gain.

And though through time insentient clay, the  
    sward,  
    My erstwhile form may hold; for joy, for life,  
For everlasting love, sunshine and rain,  
    My ardent heart above all earthly strife,  
Unbound in space, soars up through joy and pain  
    Triumphantly, in thanks to Thee, dear Lord.

### DOGWOOD BLOSSOMS

To dreamy languors and the violet mist  
    Of early Spring, the deep sequestered vale  
Gives first her paling-blue Miamimist,  
    Where blithely pours the cuckoo's annual tale  
Of Summer promises and tender green,  
    Of a new life and beauty yet unseen.  
The forest trees have yet a sighing mouth,  
    Where dying winds of March their branches swing,  
While upward from the dreamy sunny South,  
    A hand invisible leads on the Spring.

His rounds from bloom to bloom the bee begins  
    With flying song, and cowslip wine he sups,  
Where to the warm and passing southern winds,  
    Azaleas gently swing their yellow cups.  
Soon everywhere, with glory through and through,  
    The fields will spread with every brilliant hue.  
But high o'er all the early floral train,  
    Where softness all the arching sky resumes,  
The dogwood dancing to the winds' refrain,  
    In stainless glory spreads its snowy blooms.

## THE APRIL OF ALABAMA

Fair Alabama, "Here we rest," thy name—  
And in this stretch of oak and spotted ash,  
Well said that long past swarthy tribe who came  
Here, "Alabama," in these glamour wilds.  
To-day thy April woods have had for me  
A thousand charms, elusive loveliness,  
That melt in shimmering views which flash  
From leaves and buds in half-grown daintiness.  
From every tree and living thing there smiles  
A touch of Summer's glory yet to be.  
Already overhead the sky resumes  
Its Summer softness, and a hand of light  
All through the woods has beckoned with its blooms  
Of honeysuckle wild and dogwood white  
As bridal robes.

With bashful azure eyes  
All full of dew-born, laughing, falling tears,  
The violets more blue than summer skies  
Are rioting in vagrancy around  
Beneath old oaks, old pines, and sending out  
Like prodigals their sweets to spicy airs.  
And, as to-day, this loveliness for years  
Unknown has come and gone. To-day it wears  
Its pageantry of youth with sylvan sound  
Of many forest tribes which fairly shout  
Their ecstasies. But soon with Summer smiles  
Will such a gorgeousness of flaming hues  
Bedeck these Alabama glamour wilds  
As ever burst to life by rain and dews.

THE BRIDE OF NITTA YUMA.

Softly the cool breath of the early morning,  
Swamp-scented air, fragrant with deep lagoons  
And water lilies, stole on through the fields  
Of cotton, whispering a sighing song.  
'Twas Sunday morning then, and everywhere  
The May dew rolled away in diadems.  
Another day was born with floods of light;  
The grass with newer green all wet with dew  
Gave welcoming. And rose hues spent with yesterday  
Found blushes still, and sent out night-born sweets  
To mingle with a thousand other spicy  
Airs, and perfumes of the jessamine,  
And wild aromas of the Summer air.  
And murmured low the sycamore overhead  
With whisperings of passing Summer winds.  
The dapple sunshine gleamed and kissed their leaves,  
And golden gleams were on the fields. Rich were  
The blackbird's notes, and joyous sounds from all  
The feathered tribes. In lazy lengths the bayou went  
With stretches on, and murmuring low songs  
Like those of love. There floated far and wide  
The queenly water lilies—white, perfuming  
All the Sunday air.

And, like a dove  
Of peace, fair Nitta Yuma sat amid  
Her spreading figs and rich magnolia blooms,  
In rest; for there was come the hallowed day,

The Sabbath of the Lord. The church bell pealed  
To far plantations for her worshippers.  
They came in straggling bands through cotton fields  
And shady lanes. Upon their faces, young  
And old, was seen a keen expectancy,  
And eagerness. It was the wedding day  
Of sweet Alicia Bell, the fairest maid,  
And most beloved of all the country side.  
And when the preacher called the happy pair  
To stand and take their vows, no costly veil  
Resplendent in transparency enwrapped  
The dusky bride, nor great Cathedral gleamed  
In rich mosaics, nor stately pillars carved,  
To mark the elegance and luxury  
Where come the great, the lordly, and the rich,  
To take their marriage vows. But love was there  
And hope, and youth, to guide and lead them forth  
To their new world. And to his humble home,  
With whitewashed walls, the bridegroom led his bride.  
The wedding feast of simple fare was theirs  
Alone. Through all the golden afternoon  
They took their bridal tour, still hand in hand,  
Love ever leading on, through cotton fields,  
Along the bayou's side, until their feet  
Led to the forest old, where man first loved,  
First wooed, first won a bride and made a home.  
Gently the spirit of the ancient forest  
Wove her magic spell around them, till,  
As one, they had no further need of speech.  
They were no longer twain, and on, as one,

Slowly they walked through the fragrant and green  
woods—

Woods sun-stained, and peaceful, where all nature  
Fused her mellow beauty into one  
Harmonious whole. Softened and blended colors  
Gleamed in vistas and in open glades;  
Delicious murmurs, inarticulate,  
Soothing all the senses, crept in quiet,  
Even undertones all through the forest,  
Whispering primeval memories,  
Primeval mysteries of ages past.  
Once more the ancient forest, dim and silent,  
Throbbled with energy and unseen life,  
Where sunshine fell among the moist ferns,  
Gleamed on silent pools and altars lost.  
Again the musty fragrance of the forest mould  
Greeted the nostrils of fauns and dryads  
Unseen, and all the fairy forest lived  
Once more, commingling with their murmurings  
The past and present. Here primordial love  
Walked hand in hand through Paradise anew.



A SEPTEMBER NIGHT

The full September moon sheds floods of light,  
And all the bayou's face is gemmed with stars,  
Save where are dropped fantastic shadows down  
From sycamore and moss-hung cypress trees.  
With slumberous sound the waters half asleep  
Creep on and on their way, 'twixt rankish reeds,  
Through marsh and lowlands stretching to the Gulf.  
Begirt with cotton fields, Anguilla sits  
Half bird-like, dreaming on her Summer nest.  
Amid her spreading figs and roses, still  
In bloom with all their Spring and Summer hues,  
Pomegranates hang with dapple cheeks full ripe,  
And over all the town a dreamy haze  
Drops down. The great plantations, stretching far  
Away, are plains of cotton, downy white.  
O, glorious is this night of joyous sounds;  
Too full for sleep. Aromas wild and sweet,  
From muscadine, late blooming jessamine,  
And roses, all the heavy air suffuse.  
Faint bellows from the alligators come  
From swamps afar, where sluggish lagoons give  
To them a peaceful home. The katydids  
Make ceaseless cries. Ten thousand insects' wings  
Stir in the moonlight haze and joyous shouts  
Of Negro song and mirth awake hard by  
The cabin dance. O, glorious is this night!  
The Summer sweetness fills my heart with songs,  
I can not sing, with loves I can not speak.

THE HARVEST MOON

The dark magnolia leaves and spreading fig  
With green luxuriant beauty all their own,  
Stirless, hang heavy-coated with the dew,  
Which swift and iridescent gleams shoot through  
As if a thousand brilliant diamonds shone.  
Afloat the lagoon, water-lilies white  
In sweets with muscadines perfume the night.  
A song bird restless chants a fleeting lay;  
Asleep on all the swamp and bayou lies  
A peaceful, blissful moonlight, mystic haze,  
A dreaminess o'er all the landscape plays,  
While lake and lagoon mirror all the skies.  
There is a glory doomed to pass too soon,  
That lies subdued beneath the harvest moon.

## THE SUN WENT DOWN IN BEAUTY

The sun went down in beauty  
Beyond the Mississippi side,  
As I stood on the banks of the river  
And watched its waters glide;  
Its swelling currents resembling  
The longing restless soul,  
Surging, swelling, and pursuing  
Its ever receding goal.

The sun went down in beauty,  
But the restless tide flowed on,  
And the phantom of absent loved ones  
Danced on the waves and were gone;  
Fleeting phantoms of loved ones,  
Their faces jubilant with glee,  
In the spray seemed to rise and beckon,  
And then rush on to the sea.

The sun went down in beauty,  
While I stood musing alone,  
Stood watching the rushing river  
And heard its restless moan;  
Longings, vague, intenable,  
So far from speech apart,  
Like the endless rush of the river,  
Went surging through my heart.

## THE PATH OF DREAMS

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The sun went down in beauty,  
Peacefully sank to rest,  
Leaving its golden reflection  
On the great Mississippi's breast;  
Gleaming on the turbulent river,  
In the coming gray twilight,  
Soothing its restless surging,  
And kissing its waters goodnight.

## LOVE IS A FLAME

Love is a flame that burns with sacred fire,  
And fills the being up with sweet desire;  
Yet, once the altar feels love's fiery breath,  
The heart must be a crucible till death.

Say love is life; and say it not amiss,  
That love is but a synonym for bliss.  
Say what you will of love, in what refrain,  
But knows the heart, 'tis but a word for pain.

## THE FEET OF JUDAS

Christ washed the feet of Judas!  
The dark and evil passions of his soul,  
His secret plot, and sordidness complete,  
His hate, his purposing, Christ knew the whole,  
And still in love he stooped and washed his feet.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!  
Yet all his lurking sin was bare to him,  
His bargain with the priest, and more than this,  
In Olivet, beneath the moonlight dim,  
Aforehand knew and felt his treacherous kiss.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!  
And so ineffable his love 'twas meet,  
That pity fill his great forgiving heart,  
And tenderly to wash the traitor's feet,  
Who in his Lord had basely sold his part.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!  
And thus a girded servant, self-abased,  
Taught that no wrong this side the gate of heaven  
Was ever too great to wholly be effaced,  
And though unasked, in spirit be forgiven.

And so if we have ever felt the wrong  
Of trampled rights, of caste, it matters not,  
What e'er the soul has felt or suffered long,  
Oh, heart! this one thing should not be forgot:  
Christ washed the feet of Judas.

TO LOCHIEL

Dear little babe, of all born things alive,  
Most helpless thou—of life a slender thread.  
Can such as thee so rough a sea survive,  
And come at last the way all feet must tread?  
Yea! by the God whom I adore above,  
If I could fix thy destiny by choice  
Thou wouldst be safe, my little love.

'Tis Love ineffable I wrap thee in  
To pitiless pain, and ache, and storm, and blast,  
I'd bare my soul to save thy feet from sin,  
And bring thee safely home, Lochiel, at last.  
But, in thy chancing boon of birth, thy whole  
And everlasting destiny of life  
Lies in thy self-directing soul.

TO THEODORE

Such are the little memories of you;  
They come and go, return and lie apart  
From all main things of life; yet more than they,  
With noiseless feet, they come and grip the heart.  
Gay laughter leading quick and stormy tears,  
Then smiles again and pulse of flying feet,  
In breathless chase of fleeting gossamers,  
Are memories so dear, so bitter-sweet.

No more are echoes of your flying feet.  
Hard by, where Pike's Peak rears its head in state,  
The erstwhile rushing feet, with halting steps,  
For health's return in Denver watch and wait.  
But love and memories of noiseless tread,  
Where angels hovered once, all shining fair,  
To tuck you in your little trundle bed,  
Kneel nightly now in agony of prayer.

Feb. 22, 1916.

IN THE HEART OF A ROSE

I will hide my soul and its mighty love  
In the bosom of this rose,  
And its dispensing breath will take  
My love wherever it goes.

And perhaps she'll pluck this very rose,  
And, quick as blushes start,  
Will breathe my hidden secret in  
Her unsuspecting heart.

And there I will live in her embrace  
And the realm of sweetness there,  
Enamored with an ecstasy  
Of bliss beyond compare.



A JANUARY DANDELION

All Nashville is a-chill! And everywhere,  
As wind-swept sands upon the deserts blow,  
There is, each moment, sifted through the air  
A powered blast of January snow.  
O thoughtless dandelion! to be misled  
By a few warm days to leave thy natural bed  
Was folly growth and blooming over soon.  
And yet, thou blasted, yellow-coated gem!  
Full many hearts have but a common boon  
With thee, now freezing on thy slender stem.  
When once the heart-blooms by love's fervid breath  
Is left, and chilling snow is sifted in,  
It still may beat, but there is blast and death  
To all that blooming life that might have been.

A BELATED ORIOLE

Gay little songster of the Spring,  
This is an evil hour,  
For one so light of heart and wing  
To face the storms that lower.

December winds blow on the lea  
A chill that threatens harm,  
With not a leaf on bush or tree  
To shield thee from the storm.

Why hast thou lingered here so late  
To face the storms that rise,  
When all thy kind, and yellow mate,  
Have sought for southern skies?

Hast thou, like me, some fortune ill  
To bind thee to this spot?  
Made to endure, against thy will,  
A melancholy lot?

Chill is the air with windy sighs,  
A prophecy that blows,  
Of cold and inhospitable skies,  
Of bitter frost and snows.

But there is One whose power it is  
To temper blast and storm,  
And love to give a bird is His,  
And keep it safe from harm.

To Him thy helplessness will plead,  
To Him I lift a prayer,  
For we alike have common need  
Of His great love and care.

ETERNITY

Rock me to sleep, ye waves, and drift my boat,  
With undulations soft, far out to sea;  
Perchance, where sky and wave wear one blue coat,  
My heart shall find some hidden rest remote.  
My spirit swoons, and all my senses cry  
For ocean's breast and covering of the sky.  
Rock me to sleep, ye waves, and, outward bound,  
Just let me drift far out from toil and care,  
Where lapping of the waves shall be the sound  
Which, mingled with the winds that gently bear  
Me on between a peaceful sea and sky,  
To make my soothing, slumberous lullaby.  
Thus drifting on and on upon thy breast,  
My heart shall go to sleep and rest, and rest.

A PSYCHE OF SPRING

Thou gaily painted butterfly, exquisite thing,  
A child of light and blending rainbow hues,  
In loveliness a Psyche of the Spring,  
Companion for the rose and diamond dew;  
'Tis thine, in sportive joy, from hour to hour,  
To ride the breeze from flower to flower.

But thou wast once a worm of hueless dye.  
Now, seeing thee, gay thing, afloat in bliss,  
I take new hope in thoughts of bye and bye,  
When I, as thou, have shed my chrysalis.  
I dream now of eternal springs of light  
In which, as thou, I too may have my flight.

## MAY ALONG THE CUMBERLAND

Embodiment of all the beautiful  
That crowns the year, O May! is come with thee.  
For miles and miles along the rugged hills,  
Where in and out the Cumberland must wind,  
And Spring her first response of green doth find,  
A rapt'rous beauty all the valley fills.  
The yellow sun with Summer at his heels,  
Betokeneth the time about to be,  
Siestas, days and nights alive with wings,  
The stirring of a million living things.

The month is full of roses, perfumed air,  
And crooning bees upon the clover's breast,  
The morning woodlands ring with music sweet;  
The zephyrs whisper to the corn,  
And echo back the hills the dinner horn,  
But all in tune and harmony complete.  
In blissful self-abandonment awhile,  
Here on thy lap, sweet May, O! let me rest,  
And dream, and dream, till, lulled by sight and sound,  
In unison to all the earth around.

## THE SECRET

Go, whisper to her gentle winds,  
While you are passing by,  
The mighty secret of my heart,  
The burden of my sigh.

Take to her from this blushing rose  
Such sweets of scented air  
As are befitting for a queen,  
And one divinely fair.

And from this lily of the vale  
Take her, who is to me,  
The emblem of all that is good,  
And sweetest purity.

The violets of azure eyes,  
Which ever sweets impart,  
Take her their gentle modesty,  
So like her guileless heart.

Take all the sweets which you can find  
Along your airy way,  
To her whose face and daily life  
Are like the month of May.

Blow softly on her lovely brow,  
And give her lips a kiss,  
The thing were I to do, O winds!  
Would count a wonderous bliss.

She does not know my secret flame,  
But what is that to you  
Oh, winds? but take her from my heart  
Its mighty love and true.

### A SERENADE

Dear heart, I would that thou couldst know  
How, like the burning glow of Mars,  
My love here keeps a watch below  
Thy window and the midnight stars.

How sweet the breath of night is now,  
Of sweets the rose and jessamine keep;  
Go, winds, with these and kiss her brow,  
And bear my love to her in sleep.

Oh, such a love! that loves her so,  
With such a little space apart,  
Should through yon open casement go,  
And gently stir her dreaming heart.

Dear heart, sleep on without a fear,  
If all unconsciously to thee,  
My love must watch, to watch so near,  
Makes even that a bliss to me.

A BUTTERFLY IN CHURCH.

What dost thou here, thou shining, sinless thing,  
With many colored hues and shapely wing?  
Why quit the open field and Summer air  
To flutter here? Thou hast no need of prayer.

'Tis mete that we, who this great structure built,  
Should come to be redeemed and washed from guilt,  
For we this gilded edifice within  
Are come, with erring hearts and stains of sin.

But thou art free from guilt as God on high;  
Go, seek the blooming waste and open sky,  
And leave us here our secret woes to bear,  
Confessionals and agonies of prayer.



AS SIFTED WHEAT

O sift me, Lord, and make me  
Clean as sifted wheat;  
My soul, an empty vessel, bring  
To my Redeemer's feet.  
However sinful I have been or be,  
Thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee.

I am so closely hedged about,  
Oh, Christ! as thou hast been;  
My soul, hemmed in with flesh,  
Is so in love with sin.  
Sin stained am I, but sift me, Lord, complete,  
And make me clean as sifted wheat.

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING TO A  
COLLEGE SENIOR

Soft winds and a moving tide  
May bear you on, I pray,  
With the love of God to guide  
Through the year to your B. A.

On the shores of heavenly grace,  
Or the crest of the ocean's swell,  
May the smile of the Father's face  
Be the sign that all is well.

In storms, whenever they rise,  
Cling close to the pilot of prayer,  
Keep faith under blackest of skies  
That the love of God is there.

ESTRANGED

An Autumn sky, a pleasant weather;  
The asters blossom by the way;  
We two between them walk together,  
And watch the ships pass on the bay.

His Summer song yet to the clover,  
The hovering bee still murmurs there,  
But there's that tells that Summer's over  
In this sweet, dreamy, Autumn air.

When it was May and lovely weather,  
And ships went sailing to the west,  
We walked this path, we two together,  
With happy throbs of heart and breast.

The Spring was young and hope was growing,  
And love went idling on the sand,  
And there was blissful overflowing  
Of heart in touch of lip and hand.

And yet the bee hums to the clover  
Soft, all the dreamy hours long,  
But there's that tells that Summer's over  
In all his drowsy, flying song.

An Autumn sky, a pleasant weather,  
But all the Summer glow is changed  
Here, where in love we walked together,  
Before we two were so estranged.

A DECORATION DAY

The reign of death was there,  
Where swept the Winter winds with  
pipes and moans,  
And, stretched in silence bare,  
A colonnade of gray sepulchral stones.

But then it was in May,  
And all the fields were bright and gay  
with tune  
That Decoration Day,  
And blossoms wore their hues and breath  
of June.

A motley crowd that came,  
But who more fit than they that once  
were slaves,  
Despised, unknown to fame,  
With love should decorate the  
soldiers' graves?

Black feet trod cheerily  
From out the town in crowds or  
straggling bands,  
And flowers waved and flaunted merrily  
From little Negro hands.

## *THE PATH OF DREAMS*

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And far, far away  
    From home and love, deep in a silent  
        bed,  
Beneath the sky of May,  
    Was sleeping there, in solitude, the dead.

But for the hearts that day  
    Who in the distant North was sore and  
        sighed,  
Black hands, with sweets of May,  
    Made green the graves of those who for  
        them died.

## JUNE

The June has come with all its brilliant dyes,  
Its honeyed breath, its balmy gusts and sighs.  
In fields and stretching uplands, glade and glen,  
And by the high and lowly haunts of men,  
With all-surpassing glory bloom the flowers,  
And come are sun-lit skies and dreamy hours.  
The morning earth is all begemmed with dew,  
The toiling bee, the blissful hours through,  
Hums softly on his self-beguiling tune,  
While gathers he the sweetest sweets of June.  
Low murmuring, the crystal brooklet leads  
Its way through fields and lane and emerald meads.  
The clover fields are red and sweetly scent  
The pasture lands, where browse the kine content.  
The corn is swayed with breezes passing by,  
And everywhere the bloom is on the rye.  
Already on the bearded wheat is seen  
The gold which tempts the farmer's sickle keen,  
And I can almost see the gleaming blade  
By which the golden grain is lowly laid,  
And hear the singing scythe and tramp of feet,  
And see the cone-shaped shocks of gathered wheat.  
All shimmering the landscapes far and wide  
Bespeak fair promise for the harvest-tide.

The June has come with Summer skies and glow,  
Reflecting bliss and Junes of long ago—  
Bare feet, and careless roving bands of boys  
That haunted lake and stream in halcyon joys,  
The bow and arrow, hunting ground and snares,  
The sudden flight of quails and skulking hares,  
The wild and joyous shouts along the glen  
Come back in all the month of June again.  
Then other days and solitary dreams,  
Are come again with flash of flaming gleams,  
Where red birds shot across the opening glades,  
In quest of deeper thickets, deeper shades.  
The soft sunshine comes down aslant the hills,  
With perfume sweet the honeysuckle fills,  
The Summer atmosphere for miles around,  
And all the groves and fields are sweet with sound.  
Soft tinkling bells of flocks and browsing herds,  
The rippling streams and restless twittering birds,  
Unite with children's voices in their shout  
Of mirth and joy on all the sward about.  
A nameless charm, a bliss, a merry tune  
Abideth in the country lap of June.  
While hills, and woods, and vale, and grassy slope,  
Are teeming everywhere with life and hope.  
The brook's low murmuring the morning through,  
Is still a lullaby, and love is true,  
In earth, and sky, and air, in dale and glen,  
For all the changing, faithless sons of men.  
The June has come with all its brilliant dyes,  
Its honied breath, its balmy gusts and sighs.

HEART YEARNINGS

Oh! for the welcome breath of country air,  
With Summer skies and flowers,  
To shout and feel once more the halcyon  
Of gayer boyhood hours.  
I think the sight of fields and shady lanes  
Would ease my heart of pains.

To cool once more my thirst, where bubbled up  
The waters of a spring,  
Where I have seen the golden daffodils  
And lillies flourishing,  
My fevered heart would more than half forget  
Its sighs, and vain regret.

Far, far away, from early scenes am I;  
And, too, my youth has fled;  
For me a stranger's land, a stranger's sky,  
That arches overhead.  
For scenes and joys that now have passed me by,  
I can but give a sigh.



A FAITHLESS LOVE

The lovely May has come at last,  
With songs and gleaming dews,  
And apple blossoms bursting out  
With evanescent hues.

A newer life, a newer charm,  
Is bursting every hour,  
With pledge and faithful promises,  
From leaf and bud and flower.

And hope is growing on the hill,  
And blooming in the vale,  
And comes new vigor and new life  
On every passing gale.

But O, my heart! my heart of hearts!  
What hope is there for me?  
For what was hope and what was joy,  
For me have ceased to be.

The woodlark's tender warbling lay,  
Which flows with melting art,  
Is but a trembling song of love  
That serves to break my heart.

*THE PATH OF DREAMS*

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Gay flowers burst on every side,  
The fairest of the fair,  
But what are these to any heart  
That's breaking with despair?

○ May! my heart had found a rose  
As lovely as the morn,  
Which charmed awhile, then faithless went,  
But left with me its thorn.

## THE BRIDAL WREATH'S LAMENT

O! woe, ah! bitter woe for us,  
Who did the foolish thing,  
To trust our folded leaves and buds  
To the first warm sun of Spring.

Up from the lagoons of the South,  
From lake and flowers about,  
Came soft, deceitful, sighing winds  
And gently called us out.

They whispered strange Floridian tales,  
Of bayous and the brake,  
Of Spring's aroma and the rose,  
And bade us to awake.

The sun, so old of many Springs,  
Looked down on us and smiled,  
And all our foolish swelling buds  
To leaf and flower beguiled.

We rivaled the Japonicas  
Which budded half in doubt,  
But reassured by southern winds,  
Fast sought to beat us out.

And O! we spread our leaves and buds  
Up to the open sky,  
And looked with condescension on  
Our lagging neighbors by.

Bedecked in all our finery,  
And blind with foolish pride,  
We laughed unconscious of our doom,  
And of our woe betide.

But swift and stealthily as comes  
A lurking foe at night,  
Without a warning note swept down  
A storm with bitter blight.

Now all the highway and the plain  
Lie covered up with snow,  
The sun is hid and leaden clouds,  
Look down on all below.

Deceitful zephyrs of the south,  
Where are your kisses now?  
The snowflakes make our winding sheet,  
And death is on our brow.

But soon the true warm Spring will come,  
And violets in their beds  
Will bloom: And flauntingly will  
Lift the tulips up their heads.

The gladsome Summer-time will come,  
The Summer winds will sigh,  
A thousand brilliant flowers will bloom  
Beneath a Summer sky.

But we, O vain and foolish buds!  
Who did the foolish thing,  
To trust our folded leaves and flowers  
To the first warm sun of Spring,  
So premature must pass away  
To nothingness for time and aye.

SUSTAINING HOPE

Farewell, Dearest and Best!  
What matters it whether the name be Dove,  
Dear-heart, and all sweet words at love's behest,  
Since none can voice my love?

To stay is past my power;  
Oh, love, my own Dear-heart, farewell, good-bye!  
For thee I'll breathe through every passing hour  
A fond and secret sigh.

But, Dear, though it be long,  
This hope 'mid distant scenes and fellow-men  
Will lead me on, in solitude or throng,  
That we shall meet again.

THE WOODS OF OCTOBER

The last sweet blush of Summer in her glory  
Still lingers in October woods and skies,  
But changed in forest, hills, and mountains hoary,  
From green into a thousand brilliant dyes.

The cloudless skies a restful peace betoken,  
The Indian Summer broodeth over all,  
In earth and everywhere is plainly spoken  
A placidness which only comes with Fall.

In fields, where to the breeze was lately swaying  
The wheat in all its golden beauty seen,  
Are flocks and herds of lazy cattle straying,  
And feeding on a second growth of green.

A bee is seen still out in hope of finding  
A blossom in the second growth of clover,  
But nature's law, too, on the bee is binding,  
His harvesting will also soon be over.

A few more days of Autumn's hazy gleaming,  
And all October woods, to-day so fair,  
The very imagery of death in seeming  
Will stand, dismantled, naked, bare.

O! who would think that all this beauty, painted  
    Upon these leaves in colors clear  
In every brilliant hue, with death is tainted,  
    But for the dying lesson year by year?

That lesson let me learn to-day in earnest,  
    Which thou dost teach in every hue and dye;  
Who knows but when thy glory here returnest,  
    Within the silent grave my head shall lie?

Farewell, October woods—soon bleak December  
    Will all the forest wrap in spotless snow,  
But I, forgetting not, shall still remember  
    Thy glory, which to-day delights me so.



YOUTHFUL DELUSIONS

And where now, restless, wilt thou roam,  
Thou young, uneasyful heart?  
'Tis better far to stay at home,  
So young a stripling as thou art.  
And thinkest thou to go  
Abroad to taste the sweets of life,  
And miss its lurking woe?

Yea, doubtless thou wouldst find a bliss  
Of honey sweet, awhile,  
And many a love-born, smothered kiss,  
Unknown to thee erstwhile.  
And of a thousand hues  
Would blossoms give the morning sweets  
With honey-dabbled dews.

And, all-believing heart and young,  
Thou wouldst unfold thy best  
To faith, and laugh till thou wert stung  
With poison in thy breast.  
Then who would be thee nigh,  
So far from home, to heal thy pain  
And soothe thy bitter cry?

'Tis best, by far, to stay at home,  
Dear, over-trusting heart;  
None but a prodigal may roam  
So far from love apart.  
Doubt not, abide thy day,  
And what is best for thee to have  
In time will come thy way.

THE MARCH'S PROMISE

When gray clouds break on southern skies  
And winds of March begin to blow,  
Our fancies run to Summer sighs,  
That whisper and delight us so.

For in this stormy month of winds  
The first new pulse of life is felt,  
When Spring with all her sweets begins  
Where Winter's ice and snow have dwelt.

The bluebird carols out his note,  
A prelude to the country 'round  
Of chimes, a few more days remote,  
To which the forest will resound.

The plowman's song, the forest chime,  
The upturned sod, the country scene,  
Bespeak a resurrection time  
In air, sky, and sprouting green.

O, blessed hope of life anew!  
That comes from death when Spring begins;  
Life after death, a promise true,  
Is brought in March's stormy winds.

A MEADOW-LAND.

Delight of keen delights in Summer hours,  
Is this long meadowy scene,  
All rioting in festival of flowers  
And pageantry of green,  
With smiling skies above and Summer blue,  
With ancient fields below, yet ever new.

Thou mindest me of other scenes and days,  
In sunnier climes than thine,  
Of mocking birds and ever piping lays,  
Of figs and muscadine,  
Of dreamy afternoons and dreamy love  
In silent bliss, with southern skies above.

Dear meadow-lands, it makes me sigh to know  
That this fair scene must die,  
And sleep long months beneath the frost and snow,  
And inhospitable sky;  
And yet why should I sigh and yield to pain,  
Since all thy loveliness will bloom again?

For long before the red men trod thy soil,  
Or white men came to till  
Thy blooming waste, and crown with patient toil  
Surrounding vale and hill,  
All rioting with gleeful, vagrant flowers  
Wert thou in bloom, through long and sunny hours.

'Tis mine to lie beneath a changeless snow,  
How sad to me the truth,  
But thine to sleep awhile, and wake to know  
A gay immortal youth.  
For thou, when I back to the dust have gone,  
With festive face, will still be smiling on.

### IN SUMMER

The Summer shimmering to-day  
Puts on the earth a rune,  
Which blends in magic waves of light,  
Beneath the sky of June.

Along the pavements of the street,  
And in the crowded mart,  
There is a joy of Summer-time,  
A comforting of heart.

To-day one hardly can believe,  
Along these pavements old,  
That March held such an icy sway  
Of bitterness and cold.

The little gamin of the street,  
Full keeping with the boy,  
Forgetting all his Winter woes,  
Is hallooing for joy.

And I go back to youth again,  
And get myself away,  
To where the country fields are in  
The green and blue of May.

And on I sweetly glide with them,  
With changing song and tune.  
With bursting buds and brilliant dyes,  
That line the lap of June.

The morning trembles with its throbs  
Of ever-gushing notes,  
Which pour with shuddering sweetness from  
A thousand feathered throats.

'Tis true the shadows of four walls  
Are ever on me cast,  
But they have a transparency  
To me of a sweet past.

IN MEMORY OF KATIE REYNOLDS,  
DYING.

O Death!  
If thou hath aught of tenderness,  
Be kindly in thy touch  
Of her whose fragile slenderness  
Was overburdened much  
With life. And let her seem to go to sleep,  
As often does a tired child, when it has grown  
Too tired to longer weep.

A rose but half in bloom—  
She is too young and beautiful to die,  
But yet, if she must go,  
Let her go out as goes a sigh  
From tired life and woe.  
And let her keep, in death's brief space  
This side the grave, the dusky beauty still  
Belonging to her face.

She must have been  
Of those upon the trembling lyre  
Of whom the poets sung;  
"Whom the gods love" and desire  
Fade and "die young."  
Her life so loved on earth was brief,  
But yet withal so beautiful there is no cause,  
But in our loss, for grief.

LINES TO MOUNT GLEN

In this soft air perfumed with blooming May,  
Stretched at thy feet on the green grass, Old Glen,  
It is a joy unspeakable to me  
To see again thy face and friendly crags.  
My childhood friend, then height of heights to me,  
I am come home to worship thee once more,  
And feel that bliss in indolent repose  
Of those long past delightful afternoons,  
When first you smiled on me and gave to my  
Imaginations such imagery, when I  
Would lie down at thy base as I  
Do now. My feet have wandered far since then,  
And over heights with prouder heads than thine,  
Such as would name thy majesty with hills.  
But I, Old Glen, my early mountain friend,  
Am come with loyalty and heart still true  
As thy bald crags are to their kindred skies.  
My own Olympus yet and pride thou art,  
With thy Thessalian gates of clouds  
Which hide the great Olympian Hall,  
Where Hebe still sweet nectar pours  
Out to the gods. And murmurs sweet and low,  
Of melting cadences, Apollo from  
His magic lyre sends gently wandering  
In soft succeeding measures, yet in air  
To me.



And yet, Old Glen,  
A stranger at thy base I lie to-day  
To all but thee, save this soft yielding grass  
And blooming waste, thy pageantry of flowers.  
All these, with yon bald eagle circling in  
The upper air with keen descrying for  
Some timorous, skulking hare, are but old friends  
Who laughed and played with me in childhood hours  
Full many a Summer day, and told me tales  
Of fairy lore. With such immortal friends  
To welcome me again, what care I then  
For yon rude plowman's stare and taking me  
For some trespassing rake? This broad domain  
Of circling hills and intervening vales  
Is thine by ancient rights to shelter me,  
And take me in thy lap when I have come,  
With love, to worship thee. Before Rome was,  
Or Greece had sprung with poetry and art,  
Thy majesty with impartiality  
Was here. The first soft tread of moccasin  
On Indian feet, in ages none can tell,  
That bent this yielding grass was thine to hear.  
And all the sons of men who since have brought  
Their pulsing hearts to thee with loves, with aches,  
With tragedies, with childhood innocence,  
Have had thy welcoming. To thee no race  
May come with arrogance and claim first right  
To thy magnificence, and mighty heart,  
And thy ennobling grace that touches every  
Soul who may commune with thee.

And so

It was Old Glen we came at first to love  
In this soft scented air now long ago,  
When first I brought my youthful heart to thee,  
All pure with pulsing blood still hot  
In its descent of years in tropic suns  
And sands of Africa, to be caressed  
By thee. And to your lofty heights you bore  
Me up to see the boundless world beyond,  
Which nothing then to my young innocence  
Had aught of evil or deceptive paths.  
With maddening haste I quit thy friendly side  
To mix with men. And then as some young bison  
Of the plain, which breathes the morning air  
And restless snorts with mad excess of life,  
And rushes heedless on in hot pursuit  
Of what it does not know: So I, Old Glen,  
As heedlessly went out from thee to meet  
With buffeting, with hates, and selfishness,  
And scorn. At first I stood abashed, disarmed  
Of faith. Too soon I learned the ways of men,  
Forgetting much I wish I had retained  
Of once a better life. And in the fret  
And fever of the endless strife for gain  
I often sigh for thee, my native peaks,  
And for that early life for me now past  
Forevermore.

But for one day, my early friend,  
I am come back to thee again, to feel  
Thy gentle grace so indefinable,  
So subtle is thy touch, yet to the heart  
A never-failing gift to all who come  
To thee. And so it is, Old Glen, that I am come,  
But not with all-believing innocence  
As in those unsuspecting days of yore.  
And O! Mount Glen, sin-stained my burning heart  
With shame lifts up its face to thine, but with  
A love as changeless as thy ancient crags  
Does it still beat for thee. And I rejoice  
To feel thy mighty heart here solace mine.  
For when the day leads in the early dawn  
With blushing rosy light and caroling  
Of larks; and sleepy flowers half unclosed,  
All wet with dew, unfold their buds and leaves,  
There is enchantment in this lovely spot  
Beyond, by far, all mortal utterances.  
To come here then and lie down on thy side,  
As I do now, and see the butterflies  
Bobbing from flower to flower, and hear  
The restless songs of birds as they in joy  
Flit carelessly from bush and tree, is all  
The bliss my heart could ask. Here I could lie  
In such repose and let a lifetime pass.  
And here, Old Glen, could I forget the fret  
Of life and selfishness of men, and see  
The face of him who is all beautiful.

And here in this perfume of May, and bloom  
Luxuriant, and friendly rioting  
Of green in all this blooming waste, is seen  
A glimpse of that which He, the Lord of all,  
Intended there should be with things and men  
In all this earth, a thing which yet will be,  
A universal brotherhood.

The legend of Tannhauser and Elizabeth lends itself readily to a story more human than any other of the Wagner-opera legends. The restlessness of Tannhauser which leads him into such ultimate misfortune, and Elizabeth's undying love and devotion to him, are exhibitions of pathos and tragedy instinct with human life. The dethronement of Venus by the acceptance of Christianity throughout the world, by which she was robbed of her divinity, and relegated to the realms of the lower world to become a sorceress, is not less sorrowful than that of the sorrowful Elizabeth. Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, was, according to the more ancient Greek conception, a daughter of Jupiter and Dione; but Hesiod says that she arose from the sea at the time of the wounding of Uranus and was therefore called by the Greeks, Aphrodite, the foam-born. Wafted by the west wind she was borne to the island of Cytherea, and afterward, like a dream, she passed to Cypress, where the grace of her beauty conquered every heart. She at once became the goddess of love and beauty, the goddess of gardens and flowers, of the rose, the myrtle and the linden. The heaths and slumberous vales, pleasant with Spring and the vernal breezes, were her's. She was the mistress of feminine charm and beauty, and ruled the hearts of men. Driven from her ancient kingdom, from the sunshine and the flowers of the upper world, it is no wonder that her heart grew hard, that we find her the wicked enchantress and sorceress that she is in the Venusburg, situated in the German valley of Thuringia.

The version of the legend of Tannhauser here given at the end is a liberty taken, but it seemed to me inconsistent after his chastening to have him consider a return to the Venusburg.

G. M. McClellan.

THE LEGEND OF TANNHAUSER AND  
ELIZABETH.

I

THE VENUSBURG

In Germany the fabled Venusburg  
A broad and fertile valley overlooked,  
In fair Thuringia. The winds blew free  
Along the mountain slopes, where shepherds watched  
Their sheep, and played upon their pipes in sweet  
Contentment all the day, beneath the blue  
And arching sky. And in the valley rang  
Often the cheery cry of noble knights  
And jovial hunting parties on their way  
To visit Wartburg castle, in which dwelt  
The Landgrave, Herman, and his men-at-arms,  
And his brave knights of fair Thuringia.  
And with him dwelt his niece, Elizabeth,  
The princess of the realm. The minstrel knights  
And nobles, skilled in voice and on the harp,  
Were wont to gather in the Landgrave's hall  
And there contest in song. In this fine art  
The sweetest singer of Thuringia  
Was young Tannhauser, who, by his fair face  
And wondrous melodies in song, had won  
The heart of proud Elizabeth. And yet  
This noble knight was dreamy in his mood  
And restless in his life, dissatisfied,  
And longed for change and new experiences.

And in this dreamy mood, with harp in hand,  
He passed, one day, the grotto of the Venusburg.  
The great enchantress of this fateful place  
Put forth her magic spells and drew him on.  
And when Tannhauser raised his eyes he saw  
A country beautiful and strangely new.  
As through a doorway seen, there flitted through  
The gleaming, ever-changing, rose-hued mist  
A countless throng of figures beautiful.  
And heavy-headed flowers sent to him  
Their all-compelling perfume through the air.  
And far away he saw the misty lakes  
Of magic blue. The sound of music came to him,  
So strangely sweet it almost gave him pain  
To hear. And in the midst of all there stood  
The great enchantress, smiling, beckoning him  
To come. So great her spell, he moved as in a dream,  
Into the grotto passed, and fancied that  
He heard a heavy door behind him clang.

For one long year, with ever changing scenes,  
Tannhauser stayed within the Venusburg  
And thought that he was happy there. The change  
In shifting scenes, the wild bacchantes, and  
The nymphs in mimic war, in graceful dance,  
Afforded for his ever restless soul  
The wild excitement which he craved. And for  
His softer moods the chording voices of  
The sirens satisfied. He breathed the scent  
Of flowers wondrous sweet, and watched at times



Dissolving mist-wreaths as they faded out  
Their rosy hues. With Venus long he sat  
At other times, and more and more she wove  
Her spells which bound him fast to her. She taught  
To him her songs of love, which he before  
Had never heard, and dazzled by her charms  
He worshipped her as did the world of old  
When she was grand and true and gave  
The gift of noble love to all humanity.  
Tannhauser, now enthralled by magic spells,  
Had long forgotten all his former life —  
His friends, his love for fair Elizabeth,  
His love for God, for Christ and righteousness,  
And all the good and true which come to man  
By sacrifice and overcoming sin  
Were banished from his mind, so lost was he  
To all the life within the Venusburg.

And yet, the restless nature of his soul  
That led him into sin was destined to  
Arouse him to his lost estate. One day  
Tannhauser felt himself awake once more.  
He fancied that he heard the clanging peals  
Of church bells far away, and through his mind  
There struggled back the long forgotten life;  
The sun, the friendly glimmer of the stars,  
The song of nightingales, the morning light,  
The freshness of the earth, the skies above,  
In memory came rushing through his mind.  
In wild appeal to Venus now he cried:

“Are these things lost to me?” And, rising from Her couch, with quick though mild rebuke she bade Him call to mind for her a scene less sad, For she remembered well the world from which She was dethroned and basely relegated to This under-realm. Tannhauser, now aroused, Felt all his restlessness, and would not be Denied. In vain she wove about him now Her magic spells. Tannhauser pleaded for Releasement from her power, to live again His former life, to know the natural joys, The sorrows and the common things of earth. In wrath she charged him with ingratitude To her for all the lavished joys which she Had given him. But when she saw in vain Her wrath affected him, in softer tones She promised him more perfect joys, and things More beautiful. And while she spoke there came From over all the dim blue lakes the soft Caressing voices of the sirens in Their wondrous harmonies. “My knight,” she cried, “Why will you fly?” With stormy passion moved, Tannhauser seized his harp and smote the strings, And sang in mighty voice. He pledged to sing When in the upper world, of Venus and Her praise alone, but to that upper world He now must go. The great enchantress saw Her power on him now was gone, and bade him go. Then in a moment flashed away from him The Venusburg and all its wondrous spells;

And, stretched full length upon the mountain side,  
Tannhauser found himself too weak to rise  
Up from the grassy slope at first. Confused  
In mind, up to the wide blue sky he gazed,  
While slowly came to him the memory  
Of all his former life, the bitter truth  
Of sin in going to the Venusburg.  
And from the pasture lands below he heard  
The sheep bells, where the peaceful shepherd lad  
Lay playing on his pipes, and pausing now and then  
To sing a song to Holda, goddess of  
The Spring. Across the quiet valley came  
The sounds of hunting horns, the baying of  
The hunting pack with full excitement for  
The chase, and stirred the lonely knight upon  
The mountain side to full activity.  
And soon the Landgrave and five minstrel knights  
Drew near and recognized Tannhauser, and  
With words of welcome and much kindness asked  
Where he had been. "I wandered in strange lands,"  
Tannhauser said. "I pray you question not,  
But let me pass." The Landgrave saw his mood  
And courteously forbore to further press  
And question him, but pointed out how sad  
Had been the princess, fair Elizabeth,  
In his long absence from the hall, and asked  
That he should join the coming revels of  
The minstrelsy of song in Wartburg Hall.  
With gladness in his heart he promised to  
Attend. And now the heavens seemed to smile

A pardon down on him, and sweet the wind  
Blew softly on his face. "Elizabeth," he said.  
The murmur of her name a sense of peace  
And freedom brought to him. And now once more  
He humbly prayed to God that he might be  
Forgiven for his sin, and find a peace  
Of heart, and full acceptance in His sight.

## II

### THE CONTEST OF SONG AND LOVE

The Landgrave's gilded hall was all bedecked  
In preparation for the minstrel knights  
Who would contest in skill upon the harp.  
Though named were all contestants long before,  
Tannhauser's name was added to the list  
In recognition of his marvelous skill  
And, too, in honor of his coming home.  
Before the minstrel hour the princess, fair  
Elizabeth, came in the hall to feast  
Her eyes upon the place where, long before,  
Tannhauser's harp and voice awoke her heart  
To such fond sympathy and ardent love.  
When now at last he had returned her heart  
Was beating fast with its tumultuous joy,  
And scarcely could await the hour when she  
Could see her noble knight and hear his voice again.

At last the hour arrived, and to the hall  
The princess came. Her white, soft draperies,  
Embroidered in rich colors, fell around  
Her graceful form in many folds, and on  
Her brow a crown of fretted gold proclaimed  
Thuringia's princess, fair Elizabeth.  
She was of northern birth, in coloring  
Was fair, and had the clear blue eyes with which  
The daughters of the cold and far north skies  
So often are endowed. And for her hand  
The prince, brave knights and nobles from afar,  
Came suing ardently. To all of whom  
She was unfailing kind, but ever proud,  
And cold and stately in her pride, the pride  
In generations of her noble blood.  
One knight alone had touched her heart, and while  
He was away she turned her back upon  
The gayeties of the realm. But once again,  
Now that he had returned, her spirit thrilled  
With quickened heartbeats of her happiness,  
And sent its sparkling gleams to her blue eyes.

Into the minstrel hall the noble knights  
Came, bearing each his harp. Elizabeth  
In queenly beauty stood with welcome smiles,  
But yet with searching eyes for one above  
All other knights. He came, by Wolfram led,  
In through a doorway at the side. "Ah, there  
She is,—the princess," Wolfram softly said,  
And turned away, upon a pillar leaned

All richly carved, and fixed his gaze upon  
The quiet beauty of the vale without.  
"O! princess fair!" he heard Tannhauser cry,  
And then her voice, with love, which softly said,  
"You must not kneel to me." He heard no more,  
Save now and then a word, a phrase which filled  
His heart with cold despair, for Wolfram, too,  
The princess loved, but in his noble heart—  
His heart as noble as his name—he now  
Relinquished all his hopes for those he loved,  
And who would find their joy in mutual love.

The Landgrave, smiling, came into the hall,  
And in her joy Elizabeth herself  
Threw in his arms, so great her happiness.  
Together mounted they the royal seat  
To wait the coming of the knights and guests,  
All bidden to the feast of love and song.  
Four pages called the guests as they arrived;  
The Landgrave, with all stately courtesy,  
The princess, with the utmost graciousness,  
Made welcome there the knights and all the guests,  
Arrayed in rich medieval dress. There stood  
Behind them all the men-at-arms; also  
The Landgrave's brave retainers lined the wall.  
The swinging lamps revealed the columns rich  
In carving. When the guests had all arrived,  
The Landgrave stood and said the contest was  
Of love in song, and he who won should have  
The hand of fair Elizabeth, he pledged;

Not doubting once that he would win in song  
Who had already won Elizabeth  
In ardent love. "All hail! Thuringia's lord!"  
The minstrels cried in greeting to his speech.

Then came deep silence as the pages passed  
The golden cup in which each minstrel dropped  
A folded slip of paper with his name.  
Then from the golden cup Elizabeth  
Drew out a name and gave it to the page  
Who raised his voice and cried,  
"Herr Wolfram Eschenbach in song begin."  
Upon his feet Von Eschenbach arose  
And to his harp's soft rippling cadences  
Began to sing: first of brave knights and to  
Fair ladies present in the hall. Then to  
Elizabeth his pent-up soul in song  
Poured out the mighty passion of his love.  
He sang in noble fervor to the star  
Of love embodied in the princess fair.  
Applause from all the guests and minstrels rang  
Save from Tannhauser; seeming lost in dreams,  
From which he did not rouse until the page  
Announced his name as next upon the slip  
Drawn by the princess from the golden cup.

He took his harp, but hardly knowing what  
He did, for wild excitement seized his mind.  
Once more rose-colored mists before his eyes  
Arose, and voices whispered in his ears.

He stood as blind, with throbbing heart, and swayed  
As sways an oak with storm and tempest tossed.  
"I, too, have seen the fount of love," he cried,  
And then his vow, back in the Venusburg:  
That Venus, when he sang, should be his theme,  
Enchained his memory. He smote his harp  
And sang with stormy music till the roof  
With praise of Venus rang. Still higher rose  
His voice in eulogy of fairest, then,  
Of all enchantresses. At last he flung  
Away his harp and cried, "I fly, I fly  
Back to the Venusburg." Entranced, transfixed,  
He stood, his harp unnoticed at his feet.

In horror-stricken tones the nobles cried,  
"Hear him! Hear him! So to the Venusburg  
This wandering knight has been. Press forward, all,  
And in his blood bathe every sword." With cries  
The ladies hastened from the hall, save fair  
Elizabeth, who stood there shuddering  
Betwixt her horror and her mighty love.  
Increased the clamor and the great tumult  
From every side as came the cry, "Kill him!"  
And, pressing on, the nobles drew their swords  
To do their deadly work. "Brave knights, stop" cried  
Elizabeth; "Or else kill me. Stand back!"  
Her tones were full of mingled love and deep  
Despair, and yet surcharged with dignity  
And stern command. The nobles all fell back,  
Amazed to see their princess shield a wretch



As was Tannhauser now. Her voice all full  
Of piteous tragedy continued in  
Her plea: "What is the wounds your swords could give  
To this death-stroke which has been dealt to me?"  
The nobles cried, "This fallen and false knight  
You should be first indeed to scorn." She said,  
"Why do you speak of me? Of this poor knight,  
Of him and his salvation, you should speak.  
This knight, by dreadful magic bound, can yet,  
Through sorrow and repentance, break his chains,  
And win forgiveness from the pitying Lord.  
I plead for him, for his dear life I plead."

Tannhauser, softened by her pleading words  
And his own deep remorse, bowed low his head  
And wept. The knights, now softened by his grief,  
More gently spoke, but still in deep reproach.  
At last the Landgrave spoke with kindness and  
Command, the course Tannhauser must pursue,  
Because around him clung the magic spells  
And dark enchantment lingered in his heart.  
He must go forth and not return again  
To fair Thuringia till his soul was free  
From all the spells of Venus. He advised  
Tannhauser to unite himself with pilgrims,  
Then setting out for Rome to seek the Pope  
And pray for pardon for their sins. And while  
He talked there came from far without the chant  
Of voices sweet and low, which brought a peace  
And gentle rest into the minstrel hall,

Which short before with strife and tumult rang.  
Tannhauser heard the chant; with rising hope  
And with a sudden impulse rose and said,  
"I go to Rome." "To Rome!" the nobles cried.  
The nobles, Landgrave and Elizabeth,  
All cried with one loud voice to speed him on  
From the great doorway of the Hall, "To Rome!"

### III

#### THE PILGRIMAGE AND STAFF

Now full of hope and deep repentance too,  
Tannhauser hastened on his pilgrimage  
To Rome. The road was long and rough and full  
Of weariness, with none to aid him save  
His staff. But his own deep remorse, also  
His reborn faith in God, his reverent love  
Now for Elizabeth made easy all the way.  
When other pilgrims through the meadows went  
And sought the gentle paths, he turned aside  
To bruise his feet in thorns and stony ways.  
The wayside streams he passed and bore his thirst.  
In silence and contrition pressing on,  
He filled his mind with hope and noble thoughts  
Of future deeds and life all free from sin.

At last when many days were passed he came  
To Rome. The bells were pealing forth in joy,  
And anthems filled the air in promise of

The pardons for the weary pilgrim band,  
As one by one they sought the presence of the Pope  
And from him found the full assurance of  
Forgiveness for their sins. Then came at last  
Tannhauser's turn. In deep repentance now  
He humbly knelt and told of all his sin:  
The Venusburg, its dark and evil spells,  
His wasted year, his fearful seizure in  
The minstrel hall. For mercy now he begged  
The Pope, and from enchantment to be freed.  
But sternly spoke his papal lord, "If you  
Have been into the Venusburg, and there  
Enchanted by its magic powers and spells,  
You will succumb again, and you may hope  
For God's forgiveness when my staff puts forth  
Green leaves." Struck dumb with grief and deep  
despair

Tannhauser staggered forth. In hopelessness  
He fell upon the ground and wished for death.  
At last when he arose, the pilgrim band  
Had passed its way toward home, and from afar  
Its chorus of thanksgiving faintly reached  
His ears. Tannhauser took his staff, alone  
To wander on he knew not where, bereft  
Of consolation, and of hope and love.

And far, far away in secret prayed  
Elizabeth in agonizing love  
To God that He might save Tannhauser's soul,  
And bring him back to her from magic powers

Redeemed. The year passed on and bringing near  
The time the pilgrims must return from Rome.  
Elizabeth more anxious grew; there spread  
Upon her face a greater sign of fear  
And growing sadness, which Von Eschenbach  
Was quick to see. He sought to comfort her  
With gentle words, and unobtrusive love,  
And ever watchful care. Elizabeth  
Was grateful for his deep solicitude  
And love, but could not give him love for love.  
Thus, day by day, down to the Virgin's shrine,  
Where passed the pilgrims on their road from Rome,  
She came to pray, until one day there came  
Upon the wind the echo of a song  
Which she well knew. "It is their song," she cried  
With heart half bursting with its hope and fear,  
Its pent-up agony and love. She strained  
Her eyes to see the coming pilgrim band,  
And of the band the pilgrim whom she loved.  
Still onward came the pilgrims as they sang  
Triumphantly of God—His mighty love,  
And His forgiveness of their sins. And they,  
Unseeing, passed her by while she saw them,  
But saw not with them that dear pilgrim face  
She sought. "No more will he return," she said,  
And, with the wound of death upon her face,  
She sought the palace hall to wait and die.  
For die she must, she knew, without his love.  
To see his face no more; to hear his voice  
No more; was more than she could bear and live.

A few more days were passed so quietly  
None in the palace thought Elizabeth  
Was near the end of life, or that her grief  
And love were yet so great that she must die.  
They thought her youth would yet assert itself  
And time would bring a solace to her love,  
And heal her broken heart. But scarcely was  
The sun up from the glowing East when she  
One morning called the Landgrave to her bed,  
And all the household dear, and bade them all,  
A last farewell. And while they wept for her  
She closed her eyes and died. So gently did  
She pass she seemed as one who slept.  
And then Elizabeth was laid to rest  
With swelling music, and with holy mass,  
And gorgeous obsequies becoming to  
Her princely race and noble line of kings.

Wolfram von Eschenbach stood on a hill  
One day above the shrine more sacred now  
To him because in prayer Elizabeth  
Had knelt so often there. The twilight hour  
Came on and brightly shone the evening star,  
And as he watched he felt as if it were  
The shining spirit of Elizabeth.  
He struck his harp and softly sang a song  
In which he made the lovely evening star  
In its soft radiance to symbolize  
Elizabeth in purity and love.  
And, while he sang, he saw in ragged garb

A pilgrim leaning hard upon his staff  
As he approached, and on his haggard face  
The marks of deep despair and hopelessness.  
And when the pilgrim spoke he recognized  
Tannhauser, whom he kindly welcomed home.  
"Tell me the story of your pilgrimage,"  
He said. Briefly Tannhauser told him all,  
And said, "When I have seen Elizabeth  
Once more, I leave this valley never to  
Return again." "Alas," Von Wolfram said,  
"Elizabeth is dead. She died for you.  
In daily prayer for you and faithful love,  
She pined her life away, and now a saint  
In heaven she pleads with everlasting love  
For you." Tannhauser fell upon the earth  
With grief too much to bear. And while he lay,  
Behold, swift messengers came from the Pope  
And bore aloft the papal staff and sang  
Of a great marvel wrought by God, for now  
The staff put forth green leaves in token of  
Tannhauser's full redemption from his sins.  
The evening star in gentle radiance  
Shone down upon the pilgrim's face at last  
Reposing in the calm and peace of death.









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